

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

RESTRICTED  
MTN.GNG/NG14/14  
12 February 1990  
Special Distribution

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Group of Negotiations on Goods (GATT)  
Negotiating Group on the Functioning  
of the GATT System

MEETING OF 15 DECEMBER 1989

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Group held its fourteenth meeting on 15 December 1989 under the Chairmanship of Ambassador J. Lacarte-Muro (Uruguay). The agenda set out in GATT/AIR/2894 was adopted.
2. The Chairman informed the Group that Mr. J. Katz had resigned the chairmanship of the Group because of the claims made upon his time by his other duties. Participants expressed their appreciation for the leadership Mr. Katz had brought to the Group's work.

Item A: Negotiating Objective III

3. The Chairman invited the Director-General to open the discussions on this agenda item.
4. The Director-General said his remarks were based on his Report (MTN.GNG/NG14/W/35), the Secretariat Note on the Group's last meeting (MTN.GNG/NG14/13) and the discussions that had taken place in the Council on his Report (C/M/236). He drew attention to the phrase "as a first step" in the invitation he had received from the CONTRACTING PARTIES to prepare the Report, and underlined that the Report was exploratory in character. The guiding theme of his discussions with the executive heads of the IMF and the World Bank had been "strengthening the relationship of GATT with other relevant international organizations". He did not consider that it was only the IMF and the World Bank that held responsibilities in the field of global economic policy-making. Nor did he consider that a first step in this regard called for him to set out his own views, or the views of the heads of other organizations, on the problems of coherence in formulating global economic policies; his views were in any case developed and expressed in various Secretariat documents, such as the annual report on International Trade.
5. He distinguished problems of coherence that could be tackled on the basis of existing instructions given to the GATT and to other international organizations which played a rôle in this field, from problems of coherence for which governments had first to define new organizational guidelines or strengthen existing directives in the light of their objectives in this

area. It was this distinction that he had had in mind when he stated in his Report that the inconsistencies which governments had identified were among those least amenable to improvement through actions of the international organizations themselves. This did not imply that the organizations could not do anything about those inconsistencies; what he had wanted to stress was that simply arranging meetings between the heads of the organizations and their secretariats several times a year would not bring about better coherence in global economic policies.

6. Domestic policy co-ordination was a prior condition for any effective co-ordination at the international level. This did not imply waiting until national policies had changed before trying to improve coherence; it implied that so long as basic contradictions existed in defining national policies, for example when trade ministers applied policies which discouraged imports from the heavily indebted countries while finance ministers tried to mitigate debt problems, governments would not be following a coherent policy and in all likelihood would not be able to bring about increased coherence at the global level. The heads of the international organizations could make speeches or reports to draw attention to the problems, but this would not lead in itself to any better coherence. The instruments of international co-operation could be effective only to the extent that governments wished them to be effective. The TPRM exercise in the GATT had thrown up many aspects of coherence, and in future relations between the GATT and other international organizations these would be brought into the discussions.

7. The Director-General said that in his view the Uruguay Round would lead to a new GATT. The development of relationships with other institutions, as well as the contribution of the GATT to global policy coherence, could then take on new forms and seek more ambitious goals. In July 1989, as Chairman of the TNC, he had expressed the hope that governments would ensure by July 1990 that they had as clear an idea as possible of what the substantive results of the Round might be. Only then could the FOGS Group undertake the final stages of its mandate.

8. He concluded his general remarks by underlining that he did not wish in any way to escape his responsibilities as Director-General of the GATT Secretariat when it came to making a contribution to achieving greater policy coherence; any interpretation that he considered this could be done only if prior conditions were met was erroneous.

9. Turning to more specific remarks on his Report, he drew attention to paragraph 31 which dealt with a possible GATT rôle in formulating trade policy reform objectives in IMF and World Bank loan programmes. This responded to a concern which was noted in paragraph 7(c) and which he thought was well-founded. It made the point simply that countries which had to carry out trade reforms under IMF and World Bank programmes should do so in a way that did not cause consequential problems in GATT for the country concerned or for the CONTRACTING PARTIES. This had nothing to do with cross-conditionality. It was purely a question of choosing the right policy instruments. As suggested in paragraph 33, the heads of each organization could use their existing authority to ensure that the IMF and

World Bank staff were fully aware of GATT rules and requirements and that GATT staff were better informed of the trade policy content of IMF and World Bank programmes.

10. Paragraph 32 was equally straightforward. It responded to the proposal summarized in paragraph 7(a) that procedures were needed through which countries which undertook unilateral trade liberalization measures, inter alia in the context of IMF or World Bank programmes, could obtain in return concessions from their trading partners in multilateral GATT negotiations. It was for governments to decide, in the appropriate Groups, how to determine this negotiating credit in practice. The point was not that liberalization in the context of GATT negotiations should be a condition of IMF or World Bank financing; however, it seemed evident that the secretariats of the IMF and World Bank should be aware of the kind of considerations that might arise if their advice on re-framing trade policies was to prove helpful in obtaining negotiating credits in GATT.

11. Paragraphs 37 and 38 responded to concerns summarized in paragraph 7(b) over the need for assurance to developing countries that if they joined multilateral efforts to liberalize trade, they could count on financial support to overcome difficulties which might arise while their economies were adjusting. Recent discussions in the Council on the world economic and trade situation had included statements by a number of delegations that were undertaking liberalization programmes, including developing country delegations, to the effect that in the initial phase those programmes had brought added flows of imports while their expected efficiency gains had not yet resulted in an increase of exports; in certain circumstances, then, import liberalization programmes could bring about a difficult balance-of-payments situation. He had asked his counterparts in the IMF and the World Bank if they could be somewhat more generous in the treatment of these countries in their programmes, and he had received a positive reply. It was not a question of imposing additional conditions, but of searching for greater coherence.

12. With regard to a number of other practical proposals which appeared in the Report, it was for governments to decide upon them. However, with regard to the question of how ministers might participate more fully in GATT, he had taken the liberty of mentioning that there were certain practical problems which might arise when it came to joint meetings of finance and trade ministers. It was up to governments also to decide on fuller participation of the IMF and World Bank in the Uruguay Round meetings, and of fuller GATT participation in IMF and World Bank meetings. His policy was that when he felt he had something useful to contribute to the meetings of other organizations he made that contribution; when he had nothing special to say, he abstained. He was pleased that the heads of other organizations had opportunities in GATT to express their views. Co-operation between secretariats of the organizations covered by the Report was excellent; it could be further developed, and encouragement by governments to do so would be welcomed.

13. Many participants welcomed the statement by the Director-General for clarifying a number of the points made in his Report and for helping to clear up certain misunderstandings that had arisen.

14. One participant welcomed the distinction drawn by the Director-General between problems of coherence that could be tackled by international organizations and those which could be addressed only by member governments themselves. His delegation agreed that the most important dimension in the search for policy coherence was the political one; that began domestically and then went on to become an issue at the international level. His delegation would be tabling a submission in the Group covering all aspects of the subject of policy coherence early in 1990. He asked the Director-General whether he considered that his mandate from the CONTRACTING PARTIES in this area of the negotiations permitted him now to move on from the first step that he had already taken, given that the political dimension of the issue was not one for him to address.

15. One participant said that strengthening relationships between the international organizations was only a small part of the problem of global policy coherence. The central issues were those identified in paragraph 6 of the Report. These were difficult and politically sensitive issues which concerned the substance of the trade-finance link, and the conclusion that little could be done to resolve them at the institutional level meant that the Group would need to reflect further on how they could be meaningfully addressed. Other issues raised by participants and reflected in paragraph 7 of the Report were important, but he doubted they were central to global policy coherence. His delegation held the view that any direct involvement of the GATT Secretariat in IMF or World Bank programmes would be unnecessary and unwelcome. It was clear that negotiating credits for unilateral liberalization measures could be given only if the measures were bound under the GATT, but there was another dimension which involved the recognition of those measures even if they were not bound; this was under discussion in certain other Negotiating Groups and in the Committee on Trade and Development. Regarding the provision of financial support for trade liberalization measures adopted in the context of the Uruguay Round, the Group had been told by the representative of the IMF at the last meeting that there was no possibility of any additional funds being made available outside the regular IMF programmes in support of balance-of-payments adjustment. With regard to proposals in the Report on practical aspects of institutional co-operation, his delegation was prepared to discuss these if they would allow the organizations to discharge their current functions more efficiently.

16. One participant stated that the Report provided a constructive basis for improving institutional co-operation. In her view, criticism of the Report for failing to address broader issues of the trade-finance link, such as the problem of international indebtedness, was misplaced. The Report was faithful to the mandate given to the Director-General, and it was only through enhanced co-operation at the working level with other international organizations, often on an informal basis, that GATT could better contribute to global policy coherence. Her delegation saw little opportunity for GATT to become more involved with the the operations of the

IMF or the World Bank. Rather, GATT should concentrate on fostering economic adjustment through trade liberalization and on co-operating more effectively with the IMF and the World Bank in encouraging liberalization through such means as securing the binding of liberalization measures undertaken in IMF and World Bank programmes.

17. One participant said it was clear from the Report that the international organizations themselves could not resolve the larger substantive issues of global policy coherence such as the trade-finance link which were covered by the Group's mandate. The Group needed to reflect further on how to tackle those issues, and additional inputs from participants would be needed. With regard to institutional co-operation, he welcomed the remark of the Director-General that he did not intend the GATT Secretariat to become involved in the conditionality attached to the lending programmes of the IMF and the World Bank. He noted the remarks of the Director-General on the need to take account in matters of institutional co-operation of the new shape the GATT would take as a result of the Uruguay Round, but added that this would be difficult until it was clear what exactly that shape would be. Ways to improve institutional co-operation with international organizations other than the IMF and the World Bank which had responsibilities in the area of global economic policies should also be examined.

18. One participant said that improving global policy coherence needed to be addressed at the political level during the elaboration of national economic policies. The implications in terms of closer institutional co-operation could then be drawn. Countries that were not suffering balance-of-payments problems needed to come under more effective international surveillance because of the impact of their financial and monetary policies on trade and the trading system. Others with serious balance-of-payments problems needed the assistance of the international organizations to help solve those problems. The IMF and the World Bank should be made more aware of the international context of their adjustment programmes. This would permit the particular importance of trade liberalization to be appreciated for economies which had to apply adjustment programmes as a result of inadequate international co-operation on financial, monetary and trade policies. The GATT could play a useful rôle in this regard, and the Report pointed in the right direction and made helpful suggestions about how institutional co-operation could be improved.

19. One participant said that co-operation between the GATT, the IMF and the World Bank should aim to solve problems of asymmetry in trade liberalization and allow resources available for structural adjustment to be allocated in such a way that they would contribute to growth.

20. One participant said the Group was dealing in this part of its mandate with sensitive issues, and there could be no ready-made solutions for problems that were more a matter of government policies than of analysis. It was up to governments to inject the necessary political momentum into the negotiations on these issues, since this political responsibility could not be placed on the shoulders of the Director-General. He enquired whether the Director-General had reported exhaustively on his discussions

with the heads of the IMF and the World Bank, or whether there were proposals that had been discussed but rejected and which therefore did not figure in the Report.

21. One participant recognized the importance of the substantive links between debt, trade, money and finance, and said that one task for the Group was to see whether anything could be done about them in GATT. Day-to-day contacts at the secretariat level between the relevant organizations were equally important. His delegation supported the proposals contained in the Report on improving institutional co-operation, and he asked specifically for the views of the Director-General on the value of establishing a GATT office in Washington and whether further details, including the financial implications, could be provided.

22. One participant stated that much of the Report was acceptable, particularly in the light of the clarification provided by the Director-General. His delegation recognized the importance of the trade-finance link and therefore supported closer institutional co-operation.

23. One participant said the Report provided many possibilities for further work which the Group should pursue, building on existing mechanisms to improve institutional co-operation. Among the key areas for exploration were the possibility of holding joint trade and finance ministers meetings and possibilities for the GATT Secretariat to consult IMF and World Bank staff on the trade policy content of their lending programmes. In the meantime, and in line with what was stated in the Report, the Director-General should be asked to remain in touch with his counterparts in the IMF and the World Bank and to take up their offer to explore further opportunities for closer co-operation. He proposed that the Group invite the Director-General to report back again at an appropriate time on the results of his further discussions, and suggested that the GATT Secretariat should be asked also to report to the Group in the first half of 1990 on the substantive outcome of their working level contacts with staff from the IMF and the World Bank in regard to the areas for closer co-operation that were proposed in the Report. The main concerns his delegation had with respect to establishing a GATT office in Washington were financial, and he asked for further details of the resource implications to be provided. Several other participants endorsed the proposals of this participant with respect to the requests to the Director-General and Secretariat for future reports.

24. One participant said that the international organizations could not substitute for national governments in bringing effective political leadership to the task of improving the coherence of global economic policy-making. His delegation welcomed the Report and the proposals it contained for better institutional co-operation. He drew attention to the need for co-operative action by the international organizations with regard to economic reform in Eastern Europe.

25. One participant said that his delegation had never believed that solutions to the wider problems of policy coherence were within the grasp

of the Group. The practical approach taken in the Report was entirely appropriate, and he would welcome further proposals of a concrete and practical nature from participants to supplement the proposals in the Report as a basis for further work. In his view, the most important statement in the Report was that policy coherence began at home.

26. One participant said that her delegation recognized the importance of the trade-finance link, but did not believe that problems such as international indebtedness could be resolved in this Group or in the Uruguay Round in general. The GATT could contribute to correcting imbalances primarily through trade liberalization. However, her delegation was not unwilling to consider further proposals in this area.

27. One participant supported consultations between the GATT, the IMF and the World Bank on the trade policy content of IMF and World Bank lending programmes, and the participation of the IMF and the World Bank in the TPRM exercise; he believed both could enhance the process of trade liberalization. He considered the main issue to be that of negotiating credits for liberalization measures taken in the context of IMF and World Bank programmes, and stressed that all beneficiaries of those programmes should be eligible for such credits.

28. One participant said that his delegation considered that elements of the trade-finance link should be addressed seriously in the GATT, although not necessarily in this Group. Governments individually should also address the question of the coherence of national economic policies.

29. One participant agreed with the Report that economic policy coherence had to be ensured domestically as a national political responsibility, but added that steps to improve institutional co-operation among the international organizations would also help. The Report provided a good working basis in this regard. In his view, it was important for the Director-General to attend meetings of the other relevant organizations, and the possibility of establishing a GATT office in Washington should be kept under consideration.

30. One participant welcomed the remarks of the Director-General which had helped to clarify matters, but he continued to have difficulties with the way that the issues raised in paragraph 7 had been addressed in paragraphs 31 and 32.

31. One participant supported the Report virtually without reservations. However, his delegation believed that the international organizations, which were after all organs of national governments, could do more to contribute to resolving the problems of incoherence described in paragraph 6(c). It believed also that establishing a small ministerial group in GATT was not viable for the time being.

32. Responding to the comments made, the Director-General said that the combination of debate on his Report in the FOGS Group and the Council had confirmed his conviction that coherence was not simply a matter of closer co-operation between international organizations at the level of executive

heads or of secretariats. The problems were ones of substance, and the solutions found to those problems would set the stage for evolving better means of institutional co-operation.

33. He reiterated the need for the Group to be forward-looking and to consider what possibilities there would be for a stronger GATT to co-operate with other international organizations after the end of the Uruguay Round. One example of what he had in mind was the TPRM and the related annual report that he had been asked to prepare on policy issues affecting the trading system; co-operation with other international organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank allowed information to be gathered, facts to be checked, and so on.

34. Institutional co-operation was necessary and inevitable given the extent to which each international organization was increasingly being requested by its member governments to examine and analyse the real linkages that existed between its own field of competence and those of other organizations. The CONTRACTING PARTIES' growing interest in trade-related policies, many of which were not applied at the border, was manifest in a number of the Negotiating Groups and it was bringing the GATT closer to areas of economic policy-making where the IMF and the World Bank were traditionally active. This was a sensitive political evolution in the rôle of the GATT, and even more so in national administrations where the divisions of competence between different ministries were becoming increasingly blurred.

35. It was not through such institutional changes as setting up a GATT office in Washington that global economic policy coherence would be improved. The Group needed to concentrate now on matters of substance and look at what were the problems of coherence between debt and trade policy-making, exchange rates and trade policy-making, and so on. The institutional arrangements would fall into place afterwards.

36. He noted that some participants had expressed particular sensitivity over any involvement of the GATT in the policy prescriptions drawn up by the IMF and the World Bank, and reiterated that it was not his intention that the GATT Secretariat should become involved in any such way; his view of closer institutional co-operation was that it could assist each organization to undertake its own duties with greater efficiency and professionalism so that each knew better what the other was doing and how its own activities might impact on other areas. By way of example, when there was a negotiation on indebtedness it was important that the finance ministers directly involved had in mind how the financial issues were related to trade and trade policies; this could be done in his view without changing the particular responsibilities of each organization.

37. He intended to have further contacts with the executive heads of the IMF and the World Bank and he would report to them on the views that had been expressed in the Group. However, in order to go further in defining what concrete measures could be taken it was necessary for the Group to be clear on which points there was consensus and on which there was need for further work. He would then be in a better position to pursue his own



discussions and to report back to the Group in writing or orally, as had been suggested by a number of participants.

38. At ministerial level, a decision had already been taken in the context of the Uruguay Round to have more frequent meetings of trade ministers. This was important, since when ministers met they looked at the whole picture and were able to identify and reconcile areas of incoherence in trade policies with respect to different sectors. To have trade ministers meeting with finance ministers would be useful as long as they had a specific agenda and specific questions to discuss. Here, the Group could play an important rôle by identifying more precisely the areas where greater coherence had to be established between trade, finance and debt.

39. The Chairman concluded discussions on this Agenda Item and said that the Group would revert to it at the next meeting. It would be important for the Group, as the Director-General had suggested, to define more clearly those areas where it saw the need for him to pursue further discussions with the heads of other relevant international organizations. It would also be important for participants that had further proposals to make to ensure that these were available to the Group in writing early in the new year.

#### Negotiating Objective I

40. The Chairman said that consultations were continuing with respect to the format for country reports by the least-developed countries under the TPRM. He then drew attention to a submission from Australia, Canada, Hong Kong and New Zealand on Domestic Transparency (MTN.GNG/NG14/W/37). He suggested that discussion of the submission be deferred to the next meeting, but invited those co-sponsoring the submission to introduce it.

41. The representative of Australia said the submission proposed that contracting parties should recognize the inherent value of domestic transparency of government decision-making on trade policy matters, both for national economies and the multilateral trading system, and encourage and promote greater transparency within their national systems. The intention was to generate information about and promote better domestic understanding of the economy-wide effects of government assistance to industry in all its forms.

42. In his view, trade liberalization was more likely to result from recognition by governments and the public of the implications for national industrial efficiency and competitiveness than from concessions in trade negotiations. Domestic transparency could contribute significantly in this respect. If it were to be embraced widely by contracting parties, it would contribute to the realization of greater coherence in global economic policy-making by creating a more positive environment for trade liberalization. The principle of domestic transparency was simple, but the means of putting it into practice might not be obvious. The submission provided illustrations in this regard, but these were neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. The generation of publicly available information would

be the main practical outcome of adherence to the principle. A sustainable commitment to trade liberalization depended on political acceptance by the public and other interested groups of its benefits, and the process of discussion and debate that transparency would create could deepen governments' appreciation of the principle and the means by which it could be achieved.

43. The representative of Hong Kong said that his country's trade system was already highly transparent and this was beneficial for domestic trade policy formulation. Applying the process could only be voluntary, however, given the different historical, political and legal backgrounds of contracting parties. His government believed in non-interference in industrial adjustment and there was general public support for this policy and an absence of protectionist demands from domestic industry groups, which made the need for formal mechanisms to educate the public on the costs of protection less pressing. Although Hong Kong had no formal or sophisticated mechanism for achieving domestic transparency, when necessary the government did consult with advisory groups and chambers of commerce on matters affecting trade and industry. Since it was heavily dependent on exports, Hong Kong hoped that the promotion of greater transparency of trade policy-making in its overseas markets would allow protectionist demands from domestic lobby groups to subside.

44. The representative of Canada said this was one of the clearest and most straightforward proposals that had been put forward in the Uruguay Round, the very basis of which was transparency. Various systems for achieving domestic transparency were already in place in Canada. The proposal was not that a uniform mechanism should be put in place in all contracting parties, but that the importance of greater domestic transparency should be recognized.

45. The representative of New Zealand said the proposal was modest, but the idea behind it was fundamental and represented an ultimate check on the principle of reciprocity which tended to reduce ambitions for trade liberalization. It had been recognized in economic literature for a long time that trade liberalization was first and foremost in a country's own interests, and yet this aspect of self-interest seemed to be widely overlooked. Domestic transparency could help to focus attention on it.

46. One participant supported the proposal, and said the experience of his own government had shown it to be a good idea. Various ways of introducing or improving domestic transparency could be examined.

47. One participant supported the basic thrust and reasoning behind the proposal, and said an important feature of it was that it was not intended to be obligatory for contracting parties.

48. One participant supported the ideas and principles in the proposal, particularly the flexibility for contracting parties to choose their own approach for improving transparency.

49. One participant said the proposal appeared positive in the light of the objectives of the Group's mandate and the Uruguay Round. Careful examination was needed to see which mechanisms might best suit various national legislations and traditions. It was important to study nationally the effects of protection on the use of resources in all sectors of the economy; this could help to clarify views on the best utilization of resources and to avoid trade distortion or disruption.

50. One participant doubted any delegation could oppose this initiative. In her country, there was no formal mechanism for achieving domestic transparency, but a number of institutions carried out that function and it had been found beneficial to have a balanced airing of views on trade policy. Better understanding of the costs of trade restrictions could produce a counterweight to protectionist pressures.

51. One participant supported the ideas contained in proposal, which were already put into practice in his country. He hoped other contracting parties would do likewise, but he wondered whether it was useful to include general, non-operational, non-enforceable principles into the contractual framework of rights and obligations of the GATT; it might blur the distinction between a contractual agreement and a declaration of intent.

52. Two participants said the proposal was important and needed to be reflected upon. The Group should revert to it at the next meeting.

53. The Chairman said the proposal would be placed on the agenda of the next meeting for further discussion. He drew attention to document MTN.GNG/NG14/W/34, containing a compilation of additional subjects that had been proposed for discussion in the Group, and invited comments on those subjects or on any other issues that participants wished to have taken up by the Group so that future agendas could be drawn up that would allow for structured discussion. This was not the last chance for participants to propose subjects for the Group to consider, but it was important now to identify issues should be brought onto the agenda at the next meeting.

54. One participant said the Group should start working actively on improving the notification system. His delegation had made specific proposals in this respect in NG14/W/20, with the following elements: to create a general obligation to notify all kinds of trade policy measures; to agree on a common format for minimum notification requirements for particular aspects of each measure and to put these into a central register of notifications; to establish a procedure for the Secretariat to request contracting parties to produce additional information not in their notifications; and the Secretariat to prepare a study linking existing notification requirements with the concept of a central register of notifications, bearing in mind the work of the TPRM.

55. Other issues which warranted further examination were items (b) and (d) of the list in NG14/W/34, particularly in the light of the statements made by the legal representatives of the Secretariat at the Group's last meeting and the additional responsibilities foreseen for the Director-General and the Secretariat as a result of the Uruguay Round. His

delegation hoped to be able to make a written proposal in this regard early in 1990. The Secretariat would need to be well equipped to administer and to help implement the results of the negotiations, and to enter into a dialogue on an equal footing with other international organizations. In the FOGS Group, more latitude would be needed than in other Groups for participants to continue to make proposals as necessary in 1990.

56. One participant said that the idea of a central register seemed useful to avoid the duplication of notification requirements in GATT. Suggestions from the Secretariat would be helpful on how to organize such a central register and what common format might be used. It would also be useful if the Secretariat could prepare a summary of the mandates of existing bodies involved in domestic transparency in different countries, the purpose of their work and how they made known their views on trade policy formulation.

57. One participant proposed that items (b) and (c) in NG14/W/34, concerning the rôles of the Director-General and the Secretariat and the procedures and rules for decision-making in GATT should be kept under consideration in the light of general progress made in all Negotiating Groups.

58. One participant proposed that the Group undertake a more substantive examination of trade-finance links and of negotiating credits, and that it keep under consideration the legal status of the GATT.

59. One participant said that items (m) and (n) of NG14/W/34 also warranted further examination. In addition, he had raised in the past the issue of the different legal status of the GATT in different contracting parties, and he asked for this to be included in the list of additional issues. The Chairman recalled that this issue had been discussed in some detail at the Group's last meeting.

60. One participant said that this Group should abide by the general timetable that had been suggested by the Chairman of the TNC for the remainder of the negotiations. Participants who still wished specific issues to be considered should put forward concrete proposals on them in the near future, since there would come a time when it would be unreasonable to put forward any further proposals for negotiation and expect the Group to address them satisfactorily.

61. The Chairman said that the agenda for the next meeting would be prepared on the basis of the comments made. The Secretariat would prepare a preliminary document suggesting issues raised by the proposals for the improvement of notification procedures.

Item B: Other Business

62. The Chairman said that the Group's next meetings would be held on 19-20 February and 2 April, with possibility of continuing in the afternoon of 3 April.